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A Defense Fund for Haldeman

Los Angeles

A group of 1200 business executives sympathetic to the fallen Nixon administration has been asked to support a legal expense fund for H. R. Haldeman, the former presidential assistant now under indictment in connection with the Watergate scandals. The Los Angeles Times has learned.

Letters were mailed from Los Angeles over the signature of Z. Wayne Griffin, a Hollywood film producer in the 1940s and 50s. He is now semi-retired with a variety of business and civic interests.

In a telephone interview, Griffin, who described himself as a close Haldeman family friend for many years — said he got the idea to organize the fund three or four months ago but held off because Haldeman was

"embarrassed" by the concept.

Three weeks ago, however, Haldeman gave his consent and the fund was organized, Griffin said.

Griffin indicated no money had been received yet, but said it is too early to expect a return as the letters were mailed only last weekend.

Although no fund-raising goal was contained in the letter, it estimated that the Haldeman legal expenses in connection with Watergate will "exceed \$350,000 — possibly considerably more." The letter goes on to state "there is no way he can assume this burden alone, nor should he, in any event."

Haldeman, who now lives in Los Angeles, is scheduled to begin trial September 9 in Washington, D. C., together with six other defendants, on a charge of obstruction of justice in connection with the Watergate coverup.

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